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Roger Williams University School of Law

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Dean Logan's Blog

RWU Law a National Leader in Marine Law

Posted by David Logan on 12/03/2010 at 01:47 PM

Providence Business News laid it out in an article published this past summer: “Roger Williams University School of Law has quietly become a national leader in the field of marine law.” Any doubters need only have sat in on a session or two of the extraordinary meeting of minds that comprised the Marine Affairs Institute’s 8th Marine Law Symposium entitled “Taking Stock: The Magnuson-Stevens Act Revisited,” held here last month.

For those of you new to the field of marine law – and despite the field’s burgeoning importance, even many top attorneys are still unfamiliar with it – the Magnuson-Stevens Act is the primary law governing marine fisheries management in the U.S. The law represents an ongoing effort to balance vital conservation efforts with the bottom-line realities of the fishing industry – a goal that, unfortunately, causes no little contention among legislators and policymakers.

Fortunately, [Susan Farady](#) – director of RWU Law’s Marine Affairs Institute as well as the Rhode Island Sea Grant Legal Program – brought in some of the country’s leading fishery law experts to lead off two days of fruitful and thought-provoking discussion. The keynote speakers were **Senator Sheldon Whitehouse** (D-RI) and **Eric Schwaab**, Assistant Administrator for Fisheries at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). More than a hundred other scholars and practitioners in the field – hailing from Hawaii to Nova Scotia – gathered to explore questions about the law’s implementation.

Panelists and audience members discussed the Act’s intersection with other laws, its’ relationship with other natural resource management schemes, and future application in the complex world of catch shares, renewable energy and marine spatial planning. Presentations, resource documents and video of the proceedings are [available online](#).

“The symposium surpassed my expectations,” says 2L **Sarah Parker**. “The chance to learn from and network with our nation’s experts in fisheries law, right here in our own hallways and classrooms, was fantastic.”

If you missed it, rest assured that plenty of future opportunities to explore current marine law topics lie ahead. Coming up in April, for example, the MAI and the Law School will convene a conference called,

“Blowout: Legal Legacy of the Deepwater Horizon Catastrophe” to mark the first anniversary of that unprecedented catastrophe. Also, in the upcoming winter edition of RWU Law Magazine, you’ll find a comprehensive look at the big issues in Marine Law today – and what RWU Law’s fantastic faculty, staff and alumni are doing to tackle them.



Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) opens the 8th Marine Law Symposium with a keynote address.



Lead federal fisheries regulator, Eric Schwaab, Assistant Administrator for Fisheries at NOAA



Sarah Parker, 2L, with NOAA General Counsel Lois Schiffer